

An ANSWER of a
LETTER
 TO A
 Member of the CONVENTION.

SIR,

I Thank you for choosing rather to write than to leave all to a personal Conference in Town, since Orders from above have prevented our meeting suddenly here by ten Miles.

You say, you will not dispute with me about what is past or what is to come; so I perceive, without weighing either the causes or consequences of things, I am upon implicit faith obliged to your Dictates, what my own and the Nations Interest must be. But if you will not dispute, what will become of your Argument among others, that Interest is most apt to prevail: I thank you for your indisputable Argument.

I am come to London, and find no distractions nor divisions in mens Counsels, the threatening dangers of Popery are daily a less formidable prospect to considering men, since old animosities are buried, and new ones suppress'd, since men are neither act'd by ambition nor revenge, the Dissenter being ready to support the Church, and the Commonwealths man to maintain Monarchy; so merciful has the Lord been to us all.

I readily confess it is the Common Interest to have things settled upon such a bottom as is most likely to last; and I will consult Law and Conscience in the matter. And since much depends upon the good liking of free and moral Agents, and so many Hundred Thousands are to be satisfied, waving your dangerous and uncertain Experiment, I cannot guess better at the prevailing opinion, than by the major vote of a Convention, which I much prefer to your private Opinion.

Of the different Projects, which you say are now on foot, viz. To send for the King, and treat with him to return to the Government under restraints, and if he will not consent to this, to make the next Heir Regent; To declare the Crown forfeited or demised, and proclaim the Princess of Orange; To declare the Government dissolved; and begin all de novo,

and

Gent. Rev. English

and make the Prince of Orange King, or crown him and the Princess together, and postpone the Title of the Princess Anne, till after the Princess death, if he survive the Princess: You think the first will be the firmest foundation for the peace and settlement of these Nations.

This, I tell you; is horribly decried, and all men of the opinion may reasonably be exposed as Friends to Popery and Arbitrary Power. And till you tell me what the Laws are you could frame, which should put it utterly out of the Kings power to invade our Liberties or Religion, I take all Treaty with the King to be in vain, it being impossible he should give any security to the Nation, that he would govern by Law, except Faith be to be kept with Hereticks. Then I am sure the refusal of a Treaty can be no foundation of those *Universal Discontents* you talk of, except by *Universal* you mean *Catholick*, which shew themselves without occasion. However, multitudes of People are obliged to you for their satisfaction, when having once burnt their fingers, you advise men for experiment of a cure, to put them into the fire again.

Where you call the supplying the Throne, a *Fundamental change in the Government*, you take, I doubt, the Tradition of the twelve Judges for equal authority with the letter of the twelve Tables; not considering that the Government is founded upon the Office of a King and upon the legal administration of it, not upon any one mans person, (otherwise his death would dissolve the Government.) What Fundamental change in the Government then can there be, that the executive power of the Law, which the King would not administer, be committed to a Person who will put the Laws in execution? If you question the Legality of the power of a Convention of the Estates of a Kingdom to transfer this high trust, because violated, to one who will inviolably conserve it; I must tell you, when the Prerogative is crackt, we are under Obligation to the Privileges of the People, which if you dispute, you may have a fair hearing in this Convention: But first read *Edward the Second*, and *Richard the Second's* case, who were both deposed by the People for male Administration; and their next Successors were held to be Lawful Kings, when confirmed by Acts of Parliament of their own signing. And Sir, King *Charles the Second* taught the Legality of the fact, when he approved of the deposing his Brother in Law of *Portugal* by his own Subjects, and the placing the younger Brother upon the Throne.

1. Then hector and swear as many *Oaths of Allegiance* as you please, this will not save the forfeiture or demise of your Masters Crown, who is fled out of his Kingdoms for something more than the safety of his Person. But to be plain with you, under an apprehension that our Religion and

and Laws were utterly to be subverted, I was one that invited the Prince of *Orange* over to maintain them: When his Highness came, I entred into an Association to maintain them and preserve him to my power. If then, *Interest* (as you advertise) *must prevail*, I desire you to give me better security for Religion and Liberty in general, and to do one favour more for your Friend in particular (*i. e.*) to procure a huge long Pardon for any thing that Arbitrary Power can interpret either High Treason or Misdemeanor. Do this, and have at you. But

2. When you write next, be so kind as to shew me one of those thousand occasions of *Discontent*, which no body can possibly foresee.

You forebode *discontents* in the new Court about *Preferments*. To please the good and bad, is not an attribute of the Almighty, much less then is it in the power of any of his servants to please all. But in that Court where *Preferments* are disposed according to merit not money, no man of Honour or any Worth can have reason to resent the rewarding of the Virtuous. This then, you mean, may be an occasion of *Discontent*, which no body can possibly foresee.

Oh! But you foresee a Tax. And I am willing to defray the charge of this Expedition, and will pay my proportion very chearfully and thankfully to the Prince for restoring to us our Religion, Laws and Liberties. But what's all this to you? Your Maxim is, *No King, no Money*.

But there is a greater difficulty than all this: No King, no Bishop: How fairly do you intimate, that while those of the Church of England are getting rid of *Popery*, they must part with their Church into the Bargain? The several sects of *Dissenters* are glad to get rid of *Popery* also. By your own confession they are agreed against *Popery*; when then think you will they agree to recall the King? As for the formidable Parties of Church-men and Dissenters, which you conjure up in *Battalia* one against another, they must yet pass for things which no body can possibly foresee. And by the next return of the Carrier, I pray send me your Prospective, by help of which you took a view of the Standing Army you fright us with. But tell me also, when the Conqueror comes.

Secondly, I suppose this will be over voted, (I am sure it is answered, you have engaged not to dispute with me about what is past or what is to come) and whomsoever the Convention resolve to proclaim.

1. You may be sure they will thoroughly examine the Pretences of the Prince of Wales. How fond soever your People may be of such a male Heir to the Crown, and how well soever you have instructed common sense to speak of him; with the Deponents good leave, his Title must submit to a *Melius inquirendum*. And the notoriety of his Birth is so evident, that why any intelligent man should be discontented at his præterition, no body can possibly foresee.

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2. *Supposing the Princess of Orange should appear to be the next Heir,* you Address her as a Woman, in terms of Religion. You Carehize her, *Would not she scruple to sit upon her Fathers Throne, while he lives?* If *(she do not now, may she not hereafter.* O Virtue! Virtue! You pray for *(and for my part, I think you put a very hard thing upon)* so excellent a Lady, that she may not be Queen, you pray God give her grace to resist the temptation. Your Creed, or the sum of your Law and your Prophets, is Passive Obedience and Non-resistance. This, I perceive is your Politick Liturgy; and your Book of Rates for Crowns and Subjects is calculated accordingly.

Thirdly, After all your Complements to the Prince of Orange, that a Crown would stain his Glory. Let me tell you, Crowns were never made but for heads that know how to wear them. To such as know not, we find them a dishonour; but to wife and good men a glory. And is it not ridiculous in you to plead Law in favour of those who have been manifest subverters of all Law? Let those that are aggrieved, appear before the Convention, and I assure them of Law, without any *non obstante* from the Prince or his Adherents. In vain then are all your Complaints of breach of Law.

If you cannot stir up the whole Kingdom to discontent upon occasions that *possibly to be foreseen, but by your directions;* yet you would fain give interruption to the Union of the Royal Family. As if you knew the Interest of the Prince and the Princess of Denmark better than themselves, when they quitted their Father's interest for their Brother's the Prince of Orange. I admire your confidence in questioning the Legal Authority of a Convention of the Estates, when you may live to see their Acts legally confirmed by that very King, who by their power is so constituted: For if a King *de facto* be a King *de jure*, as by our Law he is, take care your questioning Legal Authority be not accounted to you for Treason.

An Answer to the Postscript.

You say, if the story of the French League to cut Protestant Throats, upon due examination should prove a sham: because this did more to drive the King out of the Nation, than the Prince's Army, it seems at least half an Argument to invite the King back again. But business must not be done by halves. You may remember Monsieur d'Avaux not many Months ago, did in his Memorial to the States General assure them of the strictest Alliances between the French King and ours, which is a full whole Argument for it. And the late Interview of those two Kings at Paris, makes a publick show to the world of an intimate understanding between them; there is another, and if you consider it, a swindger. Thus be Argueth. I have outscap'd you two lengths and a half, never to invite the King back again. I know we are a Convention, we have Authority, and the good liking of the People; so I hope we shall take care to do nothing but what will justify it self to God and our Country. As for the King, he being a Party, God Almighty will judge between us; that if ever he be invited to England by us, you shall have the honour of carrying the Message. With Allowance.

I am Yours,

